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AIRGRAM

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TO : Department of State 1965 SEP 28 AM 9 57
 INFO : GOTEORG, REYKJAVIK, OSLO, HELSINKI, COPENHAGEN, MOSCOW.

RM/AN
 ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION
 BRANCH

FROM : Amembassy STOCKHOLM DATE: September 24, 1965.

SUBJECT: Statement by Prime Minister on WALLENBERG Affair

REF :

This document withheld from public per *BUR/NE/Funseth*

8/8/78

SUMMARY

The recently released Swedish White Paper on the case of Raoul WALLENBERG is a surprisingly strong effort to put pressure on the Soviets to be more cooperative in the matter. The White Paper also needs to be seen in the domestic political context as an attempt by the Government to reply to opposition criticism that it has not been active enough in pursuing the question with the USSR. While the Wallenberg affair will continue to be a definite irritant in Swedish-Soviet relations, it will not affect the operation of Swedish neutrality policy.

There is enclosed an Embassy translation of a statement made by Prime Minister Tage ERLANDER on September 16 on the occasion of the release of the Swedish Government's White Paper on the case of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who disappeared in Hungary in 1944 during the Soviet advance into that country. The White Paper released to the press comprises three sections: the Prime Minister statement enclosed with this airgram, a chronological recitation of the history of the Wallenberg affair, and a series of documents bearing upon the subject, such as letters from Erlander to KHRUSHCHEV and KOSYGIN. The chronological account, together with the documentation (both of which are rather long), will be submitted separately as soon as the Embassy has been able to complete the translations.

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The Wallenberg case has been the most persistent issue of contention between Sweden and the USSR since the war. In addition, it has been a domestic political issue in Sweden. The bourgeois opposition has criticized the Social Democratic Government for not doing enough to clear up the mystery, and has urged the Government to make public the evidence available to it showing that Wallenberg was alive after August 1947, the date on which he is alleged by the Soviets to have died in Ljubljanka prison. The Government resisted these pressures on the grounds that to release the information would antagonize the Soviets and thereby reduce the chances of obtaining Wallenberg's release if he were actually still alive.

After the visit of KHRUSHCHEV to Sweden in June 1964, and during the campaign before the elections in September of that year, there was continued agitation by the bourgeois opposition for the Government to issue a White Paper which would put public pressure on the Soviets to be more cooperative and forthcoming in their investigations in the Wallenberg case. The Embassy was informed confidentially at the time that Khrushchev in his talks with Erlander last June was extremely unreasonable and obdurate, and was very annoyed at Erlander's persistence in the matter. However, the Government still refused to agree to opposition demands for the release of its confidential documents, feeling that the time was not yet ripe, and that further efforts should be made with the Soviets behind the scenes. Subsequently, (which has only just been revealed through the publication of the White Paper), Prime Minister Erlander wrote to Premier Kosygin on the subject on February 11, 1965 (receiving a negative reply from the Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm). During Erlander's visit to the Soviet Union in June of this year, he again took up the Wallenberg case with Kosygin but without any result. It was at the conclusion of this trip apparently that Erlander decided to accede to the proposal of a White Paper, and rumors to this effect appeared in the press in July.

When the Government actually did issue its White Paper, three months later, the leaders of the opposition were not given an opportunity to study it ahead of time, but were presented with copies of it in a meeting of the Foreign Relations Council just a couple of hours before its release to the press. By releasing the White Paper in this fashion without prior consultation with the opposition, Erlander presumably intended to forestall any future opposition claim that the Government had acted upon the advice of the opposition.

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as well as to stress to the Soviet Union that the White Paper represents a considered step by the Government, acting upon its own initiative. The opposition leaders on the Council protested this mode of operation and refused to give their assent to the White Paper (on the theory that there might be additional documentation which should have been included in it), and requested that the Government make available to them the entire file on Wallenberg. Prime Minister Erlander has replied that the opposition is welcome to examine the Government's voluminous dossier on the case. There is another meeting of the Foreign Relations Council scheduled for October 1, at which time the opposition will probably express its satisfaction with the White Paper. In fact, the opposition press has been practically unanimous in commending Erlander for having pursued the case with such tenacity through the years, despite Soviet denials. However, the opposition will presumably insist that the Wallenberg affair not be shelved and that Sweden continue to make strenuous efforts to clarify the matter.

The White Paper contained one sensational new piece of evidence in the form of a statement by a respected and internationally known Swedish doctor, Professor Nanna SVARTZ, who said that while on a visit to Moscow in January 1961 she had learned from a Soviet professor that Wallenberg was then still alive but confined to a mental institution. This information was immediately communicated by Professor Svartz to Prime Minister Erlander and it has formed the basis for a series of Swedish representations to the Soviets ever since, although the information was subsequently retracted by Professor Svartz's informant under what appeared to be pressure from Soviet officials.

As for Erlander's statement itself, it is a surprisingly strong condemnation of Soviet behaviour, as can be seen from the following excerpts:

"The fate of Raoul Wallenberg has deeply engaged Swedish opinion...We have sought to convince the Soviet leadership of the extraordinary seriousness with which Swedish quarters look upon this question. An essential part of our negotiations with the Soviet leaders during this time has come to concern the Wallenberg case. Unfortunately, the result has been negative. The Soviet leaders firmly assert that Raoul Wallenberg is not in the Soviet Union -- either in prison, in hospital, or somewhere else....We have not achieved the result we have sought. Today, we make public our account....In a democratic country, the individual citizen should be able to rest assured that the community will spare no

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efforts for his protection. As long as there is a possibility, this effort must continue and be pursued. In its effort to find a solution to the Wallenberg case, the Government has felt the support of a unanimous Swedish opinion."

Conclusion:

The Government's White Paper, including Erlander's statement, represents an effort to put public pressure on the Soviets, while at the same time seeking to avoid giving undue offense. However, it is in effect also an admission of despair on the part of the Government that there can be a successful resolution of the Wallenberg case. In a sense, it is more of a gesture towards Swedish public opinion. However, Erlander specifically stated that "as long as there is a possibility, this effort must continue and be pursued", so the case is not considered to be publicly closed, and will continue to be an irritant between Sweden and the USSR. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that whatever the frictions in Swedish-Soviet relations engendered by the Wallenberg affair, the Social Democratic Government is highly unlikely to let them affect its concept of Sweden's neutral and non-aligned role in the East-West conflict.

For the Charge d'Affaires ad interim


George R. Andrews
Second Secretary of Embassy

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